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of the Red Flags," and the story, "Old Worker Ku Fu-shan." The play, concerning shock-teams in a productive drive, was initially praised by the Communists themselves; later, it was criticized because "it did not give a strong portrayal of the trade union and the Party." According to the critics, the author should have used the play to strengthen the prestige of the trade union among the worker-audiences as well as to emphasize the "heroic" qualities of the leading protagonist, a Communist cadre. The portrayal of the Party cadre P'eng Kang in the story was deemed incorrect, "for the Party's leadership is invariably collective, but in the play P'eng seems to be quite alone." The play was thus rated "of low educational value." The author of the story "Old Worker Ku Fu-shan" was reprimanded because he "not only distorts the image of a model Party member but also completely ignores the function of Party training and leadership."

The classic example of Communist literary and artistic criticism involves the 1951 Shanghai-produced film, Wu Hsün Chuan," based on the life of a famous advocate of free education who lived in Shantung Province. Wu Hsün was born into a poor family and was thus deprived of formal education. In order to help children to attend school, he dedicated himself to hard work and frugal living; and by shrewd investment of his savings, he succeeded in accumulating funds for the education of the poor. Wu Hsün's contribution to Chinese education was never questioned until the Communist critics attacked the film. Wu's effort for the kind of education prevalent at his time, according to the Communist critics, only strengthened the feudal order and arrested the forces of progress; rather

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than serving as an "accomplice" of the Manchu ruling order, the critics said, Wu should have joined the revolutionary forces, i. e., the Taiping revolutionaries. Furthermore, they said, Wu Hsün's means of accumulating wealth was indicative of his subservience to the rich and of his exploitation of the poor.[6]

The evolution of criticism of the film "Wu Hsün Chuan" is illustrative of the nature of the Communist literary and artistic criticism. Adverse opinions toward this film were not initiated by literary and art circles, but by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In fact, the film was till then very enthusiastically received, even by many eminent Communists. On May 20, 1951, the Peking People's Daily, an organ of the Central Committee of the Party, published an editorial alluding to this state of affairs. "Some comrades say that they have already mastered Marxism, but when confronted with concrete issues, they completely lose their critical sense." The "Party Life" column of the same issue ordered all Communists to join in criticism of "Wu Hsün Chuan." On June 4, a directive of the Ministry of Education of the People's Government published in the People's Daily, instructed all the educational personnel in the nation to carry out discussions of the film. On August 4, the final and definitive verdict on the film was delivered by Chou Yang, the Vice-minister of Cultural Affairs of the Communist Government. He labeled the film as unrealistic art and a product of anti-historical and anti-popular ideology.[7] Party organs in all parts of China where "Wu Hsün Chuan" had been shown used the film as a target for ideological propaganda. The ideology of the film was also discussed at the third session of the first National

6. Most representative voice of this kind is Ai Ch'ing's article "Oppose the Slave Ideology of Wu Hsün" in People's Literature, VI, 2, June 1, 1951, pp. 9-10.

7. Current Background, Hong Kong American Consulate General, no. 113, Sept. 1, 1951.

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Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which met from October 23 to November 1, 1951. Members of the All-China Federation of the Literary and Art Circles began to echo the view of the Central Committee of the Party and confessed that, while they had made definite improvements in the past two years, nevertheless they always fell behind the development of Chinese society. This confession led the writers to "plunge" into study in an effort to "remold their ideology and to sharpen their critical sense."

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This conflict between critical and creative forces also manifests itself in the bulk of the incongruous writings of the literary critics in Communist China. The critic has ready an abundance of clichés, jargon, and theories of socialist realism, but they are clearly ill-digested and are used with little discrimination or literary skill. Quotations from Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Gorky, Zhadanov are frequent but are not integrated into the theme of the text. Even Communist critics have noted that many quotations from orthodox Marxist texts are either irrelevant or superfluous.[8] This excessive verbalism at the expense of content makes literary criticism irreconcilable with the alleged theory of its essentially didactic function. Much criticism is lukewarm and stereotyped, written by writers who are called upon by the Communists to undertake the task of attacking their fellow writers. In this case, what is criticized is invariably the "petty bourgeois standpoint." The exception to the rule is Mao Tse-tung himself, who, from his position

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8. Shen Chu-chung, "The Popularization of Theoretical Criticism of Literature and Art," People's Literature, No. 9, July 1, 1950, pp. 27-28.

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Mao Tse-tung is impersonated for the first time. 536

4. Modern play (hua-chü) The modern play, like the motion picture, has no regional character. 536 545
Any acceptable play will be staged in all parts of China, and kuo-yü (the National Language) is used rather than the various dialects. Ch'en Ch'i-t'ung's Thousands of Rivers and Mountains proves that the Communists' Long March in the thirties is always "correct" material for dramatization. The Song of the Red Flags, concerned with production drives in a textile factory in North China, was a collective creation of three playwrights, written after they had agreed on the ideological significance of this type of play and had sketched out the plot under the "guidance" of Chou Yang, the Vice-minister of Cultural Affairs. The Song of the Red Flags was performed in Peking, Shanghai, Nanking, Chungking, Lan-chou and other big cities. In Shanghai alone, it had 159 performances, and some 125,000 people attended it.[20] If we take into account the fact that theater-going is now an organized social activity of the various mass organizations such as labor unions, the Women's Federation, the New Democratic Youth Corps, the Young Pioneers, and the study circles, the length of the run and the size of the audience do not accurately reflect the enthusiasm of the people but rather the effectiveness of the Communist organization for mass participation in the field of recreation.

5. Motion pictures Shanghai and Mukden are now the centers of China's motion picture industry. 546
The White-haired Girl, based on the same version as the opera, won the first prize among the thirty-eight entries at the Communist International Motion-Picture

20. Jen-min Hua-pao [People's Pictorial], Peking, July 1950.

Festival in Czechoslovakia in 1951. The Concentration Camp at Shang-yao, which was made in 1951, describes the life of the "patriotic people" in the Kuomintang concentration camp and, according to the Communist reviewers, successfully "demonstrates the collective heroism" of the Communists under duress. When the rural production drive was about to begin in 1954, the movie Good Harvest was timed to be shown to the peasants during the festivities of the lunar New Year, in order to emphasize the importance of increasing the output of the land. The People on the Grassland is a movie about the Mongols in Inner Mongolia. Sound tracks in the Mongol and Uigur languages have been made so that this picture may be circulated among the ethnic minorities. 546

It should be mentioned that the Communists have elevated the social position of actors and actresses from that of "artist." Actors and actresses have their own organizations in the capital, and are invited to take part in the deliberation of new policies pertaining to their profession "under the leadership of the Party." 546 554

III. ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

A. Painting and the Plastic Arts

Painting and plastic arts are largely utilitarian in China today. The utilitarian spirit puts them either in the realm of propaganda, or craftsmanship. As propaganda, they become extremely derivative and stereotyped; as craftsmanship, they utilize local characteristics and traditional skills, although they sometimes appear to be unrestrainedly florid and pretentious. The entries for the Kwangtung Art Workers' 532